



*For immediate release*

## OWDS Graduation

### *Ceremony set to Honor Graduates of Offender Workforce Development Specialist Partnership Training Program*

New Castle, IN (June 7, 2012) – Twenty eight individuals involved in the delivery of re-entry services to offenders in Indiana will be recognized for achieving nationally-recognized certification as Offender Workforce Development Specialists (OWDS) on June 8, 2012 at the Indiana Department of Correction's Correctional Training Institute in New Castle, Indiana.

The participants, selected through a statewide application process, represent a diverse array of agencies, including the Indiana Department of Correction, Indiana Department of Workforce Development, Federal Bureau of Prisons, and Community Corrections. All of these agencies are involved in helping offenders secure employment and make a successful transition from prison to the community. At the completion of Friday's ceremony, Indiana will have grown from one OWDS in April of 2009 to a total of 70 OWDS in just three years.

For many years it has been widely known the important role employment plays in the transition from prison to community. This rigorous training provides correction's staff and community partners with the professional skills needed to help offenders secure and maintain employment. It also promotes the coordination of services between agencies, an essential component of Indiana's reentry efforts.

The OWDS Training was developed by the National Institute of Corrections in partnership with the National Career Development Association. The training provides participants with the professional skills needed to assist offenders with career planning, job placement, job retention, and career advancement.

"The program works to establish partnerships where none may have existed before," reports John Rakis, a consultant for the Transition and Offender and Workforce Development Division of the National Institute of Corrections. "It is designed to promote a seamless continuum of expert workforce development services from correctional facility to the community and is central to the Institute's commitment to encourage the use of evidenced-based practices".

"Offender Workforce Development Specialist Training has provided this group of participants a rare opportunity to step outside of their everyday jobs and learn new and effective skills," said Doug Evans, state program manager for the OWDS project. "Additionally, it has opened the door for collaborations between agencies and individual practitioners across Indiana".

The National Institute of Corrections, an agency within the U.S. Department of Justice, was created in 1974 as a resource for practitioners in the Corrections field and to provide leadership and assistance to

the field. Additional information about the agency and its initiatives can be found at [www.nicic.gov](http://www.nicic.gov).

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**Media Contacts:**

Douglas S. Garrison  
Chief Communications Officer  
(317) 232-5780  
[dsgarrison@idoc.in.gov](mailto:dsgarrison@idoc.in.gov)